

the NAACP, and Church Women United. In the 1960's, she worked successfully to get recreational facilities for black youth. She also led a group of concerned citizens in the restoration of a 100-year-old cemetery that is now on the National Register of Historic Places. In recognition of her many achievements, the City of Orangeburg selected her as a Citizen of the Year and has erected a community center in her honor.

I ask all of my colleagues to join me in thanking these ten individuals for their dedicated service to their communities and for their prime examples of leadership to our youth.

#### HONORING ELISE COGORNO

#### HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2003*

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Elise Cogorno, who after devoting 34 years of her life to teaching and inspiring public school students in New Jersey, is retiring this month. Whether in her role as one of the Nation's most esteemed Spanish teachers, or as an active leader in extracurricular activities for students, or as a volunteer in community programs, Elise Cogorno has been a remarkable and committed role model to thousands of children.

Born Elise Braunschweiger in 1946, her childhood was spent in Hillside, New Jersey. She and her family then moved to Morristown, New Jersey, where she attended high school. After receiving her education from Montclair State University, Elise Cogorno spent her entire 34 years of teaching in Teaneck, New Jersey—first in Thomas Jefferson Junior High School, and later at Teaneck High School. As an extraordinarily gifted teacher, Elise Cogorno motivated her students through creativity, humor, and enthusiasm. Her love for teaching generated a love for learning among her students.

I urge my colleagues to join me in saluting one of our Nation's finest teachers, Elise Cogorno, whose outstanding teaching abilities helped and inspired thousands of New Jersey students. Elise Cogorno's successful teaching career has proved invaluable for countless New Jersey students. She truly represents the best of New Jersey.

#### THE ASBESTOS CLAIMS TAX FAIRNESS ACT

#### HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2003*

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Asbestos Claims Tax Fairness Act. Asbestos liability issues have reached crisis stage. The costs of the current and potential lawsuits filed against these companies by claimants are staggering. More than 200,000 tort claims regarding exposure to asbestos are pending today, and more than 50,000 new claims are being filed each year.

Many former manufacturers of asbestos stopped using and distributing asbestos long

before 1986. However, most of these companies or their corporate descendants, are bankrupt or nearing bankruptcy. As a result, asbestos liabilities are being shouldered alone by the dwindling number of former asbestos manufacturers and distributors that remain in business. This spiraling cycle into bankruptcy means asbestos victims are faced with the decreasing likelihood that they will be compensated for their injuries in the future.

In the 107th Congress, along with more than 125 of our colleagues, my colleague from Georgia and I introduced tax legislation that would help provide compensation to victims of asbestos and help companies beset by asbestos liabilities to continue as viable employers. That bill, H.R. 1412, was the continuation of efforts begun in the 106th Congress. Since the beginning of that effort, the plight for victims has worsened and the economic viability of those entities responsible for meeting those obligations has deteriorated significantly.

Today I again introduce a bill that will help to ensure that there are funds available to pay victims of asbestos exposure.

The legislation has two components. First, it would increase the amount of resources available to pay injured asbestos victims by exempting from federal tax settlement funds established to pay asbestos victims. Hundreds of thousands of individuals rely on these funds for compensation. Under current law, these funds are taxed at the top income tax rate of 35-percent rate.

Second, the legislation would ease tax-law limitations on asbestos defendants who are emerging from bankruptcy. More than 60 companies currently paying asbestos victims have been forced into bankruptcy. Our legislation would exempt these companies from certain tax-law rules that limit use of a bankrupt company's tax assets. This relief would be provided only in situations where the company's restructuring in bankruptcy results in the company continuing as a going concern.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation I am introducing today is not intended to solve all of the problems caused by the asbestos crisis. But these measures will help companies emerge as soon as possible from bankruptcy, minimizing the potential for job losses in the economy and reducing the risk of lost benefits to asbestos claimants. I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort.

#### IN MEMORY OF MICHAEL ROBERTS AND THOSE WHO PAID THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN VIETNAM

#### HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2003*

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House to remember one of Mississippi's native sons who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War, and returns to us just this year for his proper internment at Arlington National Cemetery.

This week, the brothers and sisters of Michael L. Roberts, a U.S. Navy Petty Officer from Purvis, Mississippi, will travel to Washington, DC to lay their missing brother to rest. He and eight of his colleagues on a secret reconnaissance mission in 1968 crashed and died in the Laotian jungle. Their mission had

been to drop sensors designed to detect enemy movements in our struggle with communist North Vietnam.

Their Navy OP-2E Neptune aircraft took off from Thailand on January 11, 1968, but never returned. Two weeks later an Air Force air crew photographed what appeared to be the crash site, but enemy activity in the area prevented a recovery operation. Between 1993 and 2002, six US-Laotian investigation teams interviewed villagers in the surrounding area, gathered aircraft debris and surveyed the purported crash site scattered on two ledges of Phou Louang Mountain in Khammouan Province.

Then during a 1996 visit, team members recovered identification cards for several crew members as well as human remains. Recovery missions in 2001 and 2002 yielded additional remains, as well as identification of other crew members.

Michael Roberts was a graduate of Purvis High School and Pearl River Junior College. Out of college, he enlisted in the Navy. He was twenty-four years old when his mission went missing.

In addition to Michael Roberts, his eight friends and companions were Navy Commander Delbert Olson of Casselton, North Dakota; Lieutenants Denis Anderson of Hope, Kansas, Arthur Buck of Sandusky, Ohio, and Philip Stevens of Twin Lake, Michigan; and Petty Officers Richard Mancini of Amsterdam, New York, Donald Thoresen and Kenneth Widon of Detroit, Michigan and Gale Siow of Huntington Park, California.

More than 1,900 Americans are still missing in action from the Vietnam War. While we mourn their losses, there is some joy that the families of these nine men can finally experience closure of this thirty-five year old wound.

For over two centuries, the Territory and State of Mississippi has paid the price of freedom with the blood of our sons and daughters. Whether their sacrifice still remains hidden in a foreign land, or they rest in a small country churchyard, or they are honored in our country's national cemetery, we will always remember them—we will always honor them—we will continue to fight for the dreams they gave their very lives to secure for us and future generations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### TRIBUTE TO LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW

#### HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2003*

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay special tribute to the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law for their great work in promoting civil rights and equal justice.

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, was formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy, to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. The establishment of the Committee sought to fulfill the expectation of America's leaders that the private bar become an active force in the continuing struggles for